



**For the Environment Committee
Testimony of Alicea Charamut, Executive Director
February 10, 2021**

Rivers Alliance was formed to fight for sound water policies at the state and federal levels, to provide education on water resources, and to advocate for any person or group striving to protect water. If you want clean, free-flowing and healthy rivers, and high-quality drinking water, Rivers Alliance is here to help.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the following raised bill before you today.

SB 837 AAC THE USE OF PERFLUOROALKYL OR POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES IN CLASS B FIREFIGHTING FOAM – SUPPORT

Aqueous firefighting foam (AFFF) contains PFAS which are a suite of chemicals used in many materials that are part of our everyday life. These chemicals, when released in high concentrations to the environment, have been linked to immune system disorders, cancer, and thyroid disruption in humans. They remain in the body of humans and animals for long periods and build up over time.

On Sunday, June 9th, 2019, DEEP issued a public advisory to avoid foam found in the Farmington River in Windsor. A fire suppression system malfunction at a Bradley International Airport hangar resulted in the release of a large volume of AFFF (Aqueous Film Forming Foam), a common firefighting agent, much of which was directed to floor drains in or near the hangar. Through the drains, the AFFF made its way through to the sanitary sewer system at the Poquonock Wastewater Treatment Facility which discharges treated wastewater to the Farmington River. The release of this material to one of New England's most popular and widely visited rivers is more than an unfortunate incident and a wake-up call for the public about the dangers of AFFF to our precious and finite water.

The work of our first responders and the rigorous training they undergo on a regular basis to keep us safe and save lives is very much appreciated. Their work will be much easier if they are provided with an effective alternative to AFFF that does not contain PFAS chemicals.

Additionally, this must be accomplished in conjunction with an effective take-back program of AFFF containing PFAS. Ground and surface waters are not only contaminated through release during an emergency response, but often through leaks when stored or accidental releases like we saw in June at Bradley.

We strongly urge you to pass this bill and thank you again for acting to protect the water that is so vital to our health and quality of life here in Connecticut.